

# NEGRO SLAVERY.

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9.

No. XVI.

## STATE OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION AMONG THE SLAVES IN THE WEST INDIES.

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A PAMPHLET has made its appearance in this country, entitled "*An Appeal to the Christian Philanthropy of the People of Great Britain and Ireland, in behalf of the Religious Instruction and Conversion of three hundred thousand Negro Slaves.*" It is from the pen of the Rev. J. M. Trew, Rector of the parish of St. Thomas in the East, in the island of Jamaica; and is published in London, for Richardson, at the price of one shilling. Having learnt to entertain a high respect for the author of this pamphlet, we have been led to pay to it a larger share of attention, than its size may seem to demand. Mr. Trew is one of the few colonial clergymen of the Church of England who have appeared to take a pastoral interest in the slaves that form the great bulk of their parishioners; and who, rising above the narrow distinctions of sect and party, have been ready to hail as brethren, and as fellow-labourers in the vineyard of their common Lord, every zealous minister of the Gospel, of whatever name, who should aid them in turning any portion of their yet heathen flock "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Mr. Trew is the rector of St. Thomas in the East, in Jamaica; a parish containing at least 26,000 souls. When

he first undertook its cure, almost the whole of this vast multitude were sunk in the most profound moral darkness, with the exception of a few hundreds who had been converted to Christianity, by the benevolent and never-to-be-forgotten labours of some Wesleyan missionaries. He soon saw that the field he had to cultivate was far too extensive for his own exertions, though aided by those of a pious and excellent curate, Mr. Stainsby. Instead therefore of indulging any feelings of hostility towards these missionaries, as insidious and dangerous intruders on his demesnes, he rather rejoiced to witness their indefatigable exertions, in extending among those nominally committed to his care, but whom that care could by no possibility reach, the saving knowledge of Divine truth. But though thus efficiently aided, he represents more than three-fourths of his large flock as still wholly without any adequate means of Christian instruction. On this appalling fact, exhibiting indeed a lamentable state of religious destitution, even in this the most highly favoured (with perhaps one exception, that of Kingston,) of all the parishes in Jamaica, he founds his appeal to the British public, and more particularly to that part of it who have laboured to improve

the temporal condition of the slaves, for assistance in improving their spiritual condition also. — Before we proceed to make the observations which have occurred to us on the claim thus preferred, and on the general subject of the religious state of Jamaica, we are anxious to settle some small points of difference with the pious and respected author of this pamphlet.

He begins with reproaching the Abolitionists with their culpable inattention to the moral well-being of the slaves.—Petitions for the amelioration of their temporal condition have been presented to Parliament; but he has looked, in vain, for any petitions arousing the public attention to the slender provision yet made for supplying their spiritual wants. Among the advocates of freedom, he cannot find one individual attempting to lay hold of the popular feeling, in order to promote Christianity among the slaves; and very few indeed who have contributed their money to that object. “The cry of Negro emancipation,” he adds, “has penetrated the heart of the kingdom; and numerous pamphlets have issued from the press on both sides of the question: but we have yet to learn how far the professed friends of the measure are really disposed to assist in teaching the slave what is the value of the soul, and in what man’s chief happiness should consist on this side the grave.” We acquit Mr. Trew of any intention to misrepresent the Abolitionists; but we must say, that he has wholly overlooked the most important facts of the case, and has therefore been guilty of great and palpable injustice toward them. If he had read Mr. Wilberforce’s “Appeal,” for example, “to the RELIGION, Justice, and Humanity of the Inhabitants of the British Empire, in behalf of the Negro Slaves in the West Indies,” he never could have advanced such a charge. And why was it that that Appeal to the *Religion* of this country failed to produce the effect

which it was so well calculated to produce? Was it not, in some measure, because the Rev. Mr. Bridges, a clergyman of Jamaica, was permitted, without one line of contradiction on the part of Mr. Trew or any one of his other colleagues (with the single exception of Mr. Bickell), to charge Mr. Wilberforce with gross and wilful misrepresentation, for having endeavoured to excite that very feeling which it is the object of our author’s pamphlet, at this late hour, to excite, for the lamentable destitution of adequate religious instruction under which the slaves of Jamaica appeared to him to labour? In his “Appeal,” published in 1823, Mr. Wilberforce, for the hundredth time, denounced that deplorable neglect of the spiritual interests of the colonial slaves which Mr. Trew, after a personal knowledge of that neglect during twelve long years, has at length come forward to denounce. Now we do not pretend to blame Mr. Trew for having been so tardy in his efforts: we know the formidable difficulties of his situation: but we marvel that he should have chosen to break his silence by charging those with culpable neglect who, for years, had been doing their utmost to rouse attention to the subject; and we can only account for it by supposing that some such censure might be deemed requisite, in the outset, in order to obtain a favourable reception, from colonial readers, for the benevolent designs which are here proposed and advocated.

But this was not all. Another pamphlet, which, in conjunction with that of Mr. Wilberforce, led the way in the present discussions, and which was also published early in 1823, by the Anti-slavery Society, and with their express sanction, distinctly pointed out the “moral condition of our slave colonies,” as loudly calling for the best efforts of the benevolent in this country. What was the picture drawn of that condition? It was this: “The

marriage of slaves has not yet been legalized. The most unrestrained licentiousness prevails, almost universally, on estates, among all classes whether White or Black. The face of society presents, with few exceptions, one unvarying scene of open concubinage. The Christian Sabbath, instead of being a day of rest and religious observance, continues to be the universally authorized market-day; and, in almost all the colonies, and especially in Jamaica, a day of compulsory labour for the slaves," they being compelled to cultivate their provision grounds on that day on pain of starving. ("Negro Slavery," "especially as it exists in Jamaica," published by Hatchard, 3d edition, p. 87.)

And did the friends of West-Indian reformation confine themselves to a barren exposition of the evil which they thus denounced? Far from it. Among the very first propositions which were made by Mr. Buxton to his Majesty's Ministers, and to Parliament, on the subject of Negro Slavery, were the following:—

"To abolish markets and compulsory labour on the Sunday; and to make that day a day of rest, as well as of religious worship and instruction;"—"to provide the means of religious instruction for the Black and Coloured population, and of Christian education for their children;"—and further, "to institute marriage among the slaves; and to protect that state from violation, and from either forcible or voluntary disruption." (See preface to Debate of 15th May 1823, published by Hatchard, p. xxvi, &c.)

Can it then with any justice be said, that the Abolitionists have overlooked those spiritual necessities of the Negro population which they are now accused of having merged in an exclusive solicitude for their temporal condition?

But no petitions, it seems, have been presented to Parliament soliciting its attention to the slender provision made for supplying the spiritual wants of the Negroes. But

on what ground could Mr. Trew expect that such petitions should have been presented? No sooner indeed was the question agitated, than government at once expressed their intention of giving to the colonies a regular episcopal establishment, and of contributing from the public purse to its maintenance. Whatever else might be required, it was obvious, ought to be supplied by the colonists themselves, who are as much bound, whatever Mr. Trew may say to extenuate the force of this obligation (see p. 21), to supply to their slaves the means of religious instruction and education, as the proprietors of the soil in this country, or in Scotland, are to provide for the spiritual wants of their dependants. Why should the landholders in the West Indies be exempt from this just burden, any more than the landholders in England, or in Scotland? Must we be operated not merely to enrich the planter by bounties and protecting duties, but in order to exempt him from the obligation of applying any part of what he thus pockets to the spiritual benefit of those very labourers who till the soil for his exclusive profit without wages? Besides, has nothing indeed been done, by the Abolitionists, for the spiritual benefit of the slaves? Have none of them contributed to the Moravian missions, to the Methodist missions, to the missions of the London Missionary Society, or to those of the Church Missionary and other episcopal institutions? If they have been backward in contributing in some one particular channel, may they not have had good reasons for their backwardness? Are they to be blamed, if they have hesitated about placing funds in hands which might possibly, according to their view, misapply them? Surely before their money is placed at the absolute disposal of either West-Indian planters, or West-Indian clergymen, or even West-Indian bishops, for such sacred objects

as those of extending among the slaves a knowledge of the Gospel, and of bestowing upon them a Christian education, some security should be obtained that the parties so confided in have earned that confidence by the zeal they have already shewn for the spiritual interests of the poor Negroes. Mr. Trew cannot have forgotten that, in the year 1822, the Jamaica Auxiliary Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, comprising among its subscribers all the clergy in that island, most of the public functionaries, and many planters, deemed it necessary to obviate the popular alarm which their institution had created among the mass of the White colonists, by explicitly declaring that the *slaves* were not included within the scope of their benevolence, which was to be directed exclusively to the *free* population. He must also have well known the general and most inveterate hostility, on the part of great numbers of the planters, to any instruction at all; and of almost all of them, to any but what was strictly oral being communicated to the slaves;—an hostility to which the bishop himself, and probably Mr. Trew, have been under the painful necessity of deferring. And yet it is for not having come forward, with a kind of quixotic liberality, to scatter their seed at hazard in a soil so unfavourable, in the vain hope that it might, some how or other, yield its fruit, that they are so severely censured. What could have justified them in such a course? Nothing which we can conceive, except the very ignoble motive of avoiding the sneer of some colonial journalist, or the graver censure of our well meaning but mistaken author. If Mr. Trew can shew that the Abolitionists, in their respective lines of operations, have neglected any *good* opportunity which has been hitherto really presented to them, of promoting the spiritual

improvement of the Negro population, then his censure may be just. But we cannot see that they have done so, unless it is wrong in them not to have sent missionaries and schoolmasters of their own to convert and educate the slaves. And what reception these would have met with at the hands of the planters of Jamaica, no man can better tell than Mr. Trew. Cautious, and measured as his own conduct has been, he has not escaped the suspicion of anti-colonial designs; merely because he has dared to shew a more than ordinary solicitude to do his duty to the slaves as a minister of Christ. Has he not, on that very account, been branded and denounced, by such men as Mr. Bridges, as an enemy to the colonies, and an emissary of the African Institution, and been under the necessity of appealing to the laws for protection against such perilous imputations? And if so, what degree of favour or indulgence could any man have hoped for, who was commissioned by the Abolitionists of Great Britain to instruct the slaves; or who was even singled out by them as a proper channel into which to pour their contributions? Would he himself choose to be considered as the selected instrument of the Abolitionists, for carrying on their religious missions in Jamaica?—If it be said that they have, in the bishop, an official channel for their bounty, may they not still be forced to hesitate, and to ask, by what instruments the bishop is likely to operate; whether by men of real zeal and efficiency, or by those of whose parishes, though they have held the spiritual charge of them for years, the bishop is compelled to say that they are without even the semblance of religious worship\*? Let Mr. Trew give a full and satisfactory solution of these various doubts and difficulties, before he

\* See the Report of the Bishop of Jamaica, Parliamentary Papers of 1826, p. 122.

again blames those who desire, as intensely as he or any man can do, the spiritual improvement of the slaves, merely because, until they obtain an adequate guarantee for the due application of their bounty, they hesitate to place funds, consecrated to the promotion of the Gospel, in the hands of men who have not yet proved themselves zealous for its extension; or who think that they shall discharge their pastoral or episcopal obligations to the slave population, not by teaching them to *read* and understand their Bibles, but by merely hearing them repeat, perhaps through the medium of a catechist, once a week, or once a fortnight, or once a month, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments.

But there is another circumstance of which Mr. Trew has entirely lost sight. He expects that all who join in petitions, for the extinction of slavery, should be equally prepared to unite in petitions for increasing the number of the ministers and catechists of the Established Church. But he must be aware that this is a prayer in which Quakers, Dissenters, and Methodists, the Presbyterians of Scotland, and the Catholics of Ireland, however solicitous they may be to alleviate the sufferings of the slaves, could hardly be expected very cordially to join. Such an object, it is obvious, must be effected, not by any general petitions, but either by the act of the imperial government or of the colonial legislatures, or by the voluntary associations of particular bodies of Christians, whether of the Established Church or of the different Dissenting communions, all of them applying their contributions in a way accordant with their own respective religious views.

We trust that Mr. Trew himself will, by this time, be satisfied that his censures have been uncalled for; and that the Abolitionists cannot with any fairness be represented as

having been indifferent to the supremely important object of the religious improvement of the slave population. Indeed, if there be any one view, more than another, in which they are led to regard the colonial system as replete with evil, it is in its tendency to impede and frustrate the labours of such men as Mr. Trew. Mr. Trew disclaims, indeed, any intention of affirming that Christianity and slavery are incompatible, and we do not blame him for the disclaimer. And yet we would ask him what is actually, at this moment, and what has always been, the grand impediment to the diffusion of religious knowledge, and moral culture, among the Negroes? Has it not been their slavery? What is it which creates one of his own great difficulties in the efforts he is making to propagate the Gospel among the slaves? What but the unlimited despotism of the master, who has it as completely in his power to exclude the light of the Gospel from the bondsmen on his estate, as to direct the application of their labour? A minister cannot have access to them, nor can they have the opportunity of attending his ministry, if the master or overseer shall withhold his assent. Pastor, as Mr. Trew is, of St. Thomas in the East, entrusted with the care of the souls of 25,000 Negroes who inhabit it, he cannot enter the dwelling of a single slave, to grant him spiritual instruction or spiritual consolation, if the owner of that slave shall refuse his concurrence. And then, as to education, what is the real obstacle to its extension among them? Independently of Sunday labour and Sunday markets, is it not true, that, from the earliest age, the Negroes are, in general, so occupied in the labour of the plantation, as to render any thing like what we term education, nearly, if not utterly impracticable? Observe the account which is given by the Bishop of Jamaica, of the economy of one of the

most favoured estates, in Mr. Trew's own favoured parish of St. Thomas in the East, the estate of Golden Grove, belonging to Mr. Archdeckne. It is not only the *men* and the *women*, but the *boys* and the *girls*, who are there described as employed, under drivers, in the labour of the estate; and not only these but the "children," and "the *younger children*, just old enough to be taken from the nursery," are placed under driveresses, to learn such habits of industry as the whip or the switch can teach them\*. Viewing, therefore, this universality and continuity of labour, this incessant drudgery, from the merest infancy to age, on an estate which is described, with a kind of exultation, as exhibiting the very perfection of West-Indian economics, but where, nevertheless, the slaves decrease, can we wonder at the brutish, the worse than heathen ignorance, which Mr. Trew so feelingly deplores, as still prevailing throughout the great mass of the slave population of this beautiful island? And how is a remedy to be applied? We may talk for ever of the Christian education of these slaves; we may have appeal on appeal addressed to us on the subject; we may consent to lavish our money in compliance with such appeals; yet while the "*children*" and the "*younger children*" continue to be bound down, from morning to night, to the earth, for six days in the week, learning from the rod of the driveress her impressive lessons of industry, how is the professed end of all these appeals and of all these contributions to be answered? Even Mr. Trew does not venture to hint a hope that the money will be applied in any such way as we should consider to be education in this country. And the bishop is still more explicit; for he conceives, that,

"in the present state of public opinion," the utmost length he can go, in his peculiar province, is to give to the children occasional *oral* instruction by means of catechists†.

But notwithstanding the strength of these observations, which, however, are by no means stronger than the case warrants, we have a sincere pleasure in recommending Mr. Trew and his objects to the benevolent consideration and support of the Christian public. His proposal is to establish *Sabbath* schools for the education of the rising generation of slaves, upwards of 280,000 souls among whom—(he might have added 40,000 to that number)—are "*now left in utter destitution of the means of spiritual improvement in this single island.*" We admit that Mr. Trew's pastoral influence does not extend to above a tenth or twelfth part of this immense mass; but even the improvement of such a section of the whole, is an object worthy of the utmost exertions, especially as the example, which we trust will be exhibited there, may eventually be extended to other parishes. But let us hear Mr. Trew himself.

"The parish from which this appeal is addressed presents to the eye of the philanthropist, and the Christian, a population of twenty-five thousand slaves, where a society has been established for the express purpose of promoting their conversion and religious instruction; patronized by the lord Bishop of the diocese, the highly respectable President of his Majesty's Council, and the local authorities; presenting at the same time a most interesting field, and a most secure channel, for diffusing the bounty of the benevolent with good effect.

"Here, there is a district bounded by a sea-coast of at least fifty miles, where the most ardent thirst for knowledge exists amongst the Negro population, who are anxiously supplicating the Christian world, and saying, 'Come over and help us.' Here are proprietors, and their representa-

\* See the Bishop of Jamaica's Report, in the Parliamentary Papers of last session, p. 120.

† See his Report, as above cited, p. 119.

tives, willing to lend their influence, as many of them have already given their money, in furtherance of the Christian cause. Here are individuals, who, with a view to the public benefit, and apart from selfish considerations, would cheerfully afford spots of ground on which to erect either chapels or school-houses, as the case might be;—and here, too, are to be found (and what it is of the utmost importance should be considered,) numerous well-disposed Persons of Colour, who would become the willing agents for carrying into effect any general system for the religious instruction of the Negroes. And what shall I say more? The means alone are wanting for giving full effect to every measure which the most benevolent individual can contemplate, for a general diffusion of the blessings of the Gospel of Peace.—Here, then, let the work commence; and as the other parishes of the island form societies for a similar object, let the charity of the nation flow to them likewise through the same channel, or through any others whatsoever, whereby the Negro may reap the benefits contemplated in such benevolent designs. In this view of the subject I must appear before my readers in a new character. Hitherto I have endeavoured feebly to plead the Negro cause, generally, throughout the island; but now I must stand forth as a minister, pleading for the spiritual necessities of his own people, and they, Negro slaves, avowedly the objects of your compassion. Standing on this vantage ground, difficulties which before appeared almost insurmountable, and likely to mar my prospects in this appeal, dwindle into nothing. Resting on the basis of eternal truth, I can appeal from that volume where charity or love to our fellow-men, for Christ's sake, is laid down as a summary of all Christian duty; and where a cup of cold water only, offered to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, is accounted more than 'all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.' Contemplating the parish of St. Thomas in the East, amidst all the advantages it possesses from a tolerant magistracy and a liberal public, what must be the spiritual condition of its slave population for years to come, unaided by British benevolence? Three places of worship connected with the Established Church, and a like number with the Wesleyan missions, altogether afford means for the accommodation of only three thousand people; whilst there are at present nearly five thousand slaves who have been brought under the influence of practical religion, and are evincing, as far as might reasonably be expected, a consistently Christian deportment.

“ From this statement it would appear, estimating the slave population at 25,000, that there are no fewer than 20,000 Negroes

in this single parish (notwithstanding the liberal support afforded by the constituted authorities to those labouring in the work of Negro instruction,) who are yet destitute of the means whereby the consoling and moralizing truths of the Gospel may be imparted to them.” pp. 18—20.

Thus far we agree with this amiable and excellent individual. But when he proceeds, in the following pages, to excuse the colonists from the high moral obligation which attaches to them to provide for the spiritual wants of their bondsmen, in order to throw it upon the people of this country, we think he descends from his lofty station as a minister of Jesus Christ, bound to declare his will with fidelity to those over whom he is placed; and somewhat timidly compromises one of his own most solemn duties. We admit that a deep responsibility rests with the government and the people of this country for not having long since compelled the colonists to perform their duty to their slaves, and that every day they delay to do so adds to their guilt. But why extenuate, on that account, the guilt of the colonists? Is it right in the sight of God to do so? “ Their means,” he intimates, “ were restricted.” They could not therefore “ be expected, exclusively, to undertake and perpetuate the religious instruction of the Negroes and their posterity.” Were the planters, then, at any time exempt, or are they now exempt, from the common obligations of Christianity? Were they not bound to set before their slaves at least a Christian example? Were they not at least bound to give them the Christian Sabbath? Were they not bound, if restricted in their means, to have applied for help? Did they ever do so? Did they ever represent to the mother country their need of zealous and efficient ministers; or ever propose to prevent, by law, the uniform and universal desecration of the Sabbath? On the contrary, did they not take, from the slaves,



that day of rest which God in his mercy had given to them, and turn it into a day of labour? Did they not even vilify those who denounced such conduct? Did they not frown upon many of the attempts to Christianize their slaves? And, but for the decided interference of the parent state, would it have been possible for those despised and outraged missionaries, who, for many a long year, alone cared and laboured for the souls of their bondsmen, to have maintained their ground in the colonies? Even in the town of Kingston, in Jamaica, so recently as 1790, the Methodists were assailed by outrage, and their chapel presented by a grand jury as a nuisance. In later times, we have seen the White oligarchy of Barbadoes combining to raze to the earth the very house which had been erected for the instruction of their slaves, and succeeding in their impious design under the very eye of the local authorities; and in another colony, the zealous and faithful missionary pursued with inveterate hostility, and at last crowned with martyrdom. And yet Mr. Trew, a Christian minister, would throw in his *smooth things*, to set the consciences of the colonists at ease respecting their conduct on this point. The crime, he leads them to infer, is not so much theirs as ours. The crime is indeed ours, and a crime, we admit, of the deepest dye. But is theirs lessened by our participation of it? On the contrary, is not theirs aggravated, by having done all in their power to keep us from seeing and repairing our fault? And have not their very pastors, the very men who, as watchmen in Zion, ought first to have sounded the alarm, laboured to foster the delusion by which we were kept in ignorance of the truth, while they were ready to load those who endeavoured to dispel that ignorance with every species of obloquy and outrage?

The advocates of emancipation,

we are told, should have devised means for remedying this state of things. And to whom but to the advocates of emancipation is it owing, that the public attention has been called to the subject? Was it not their efforts which first led the excellent Bishop Porteus to turn his thoughts to the destitute condition of the slave population? And who are the persons who are now labouring to give a Sabbath to the slaves, that Sabbath which is essential even to Mr. Trew's limited plan of spiritual improvement? Are they not the advocates of emancipation? What would he have them do more? Would he have them to go themselves on a mission to Jamaica? Would they be received? Would not every gate be barred against them?—Or would he have them to give their money? But to whom? Where are the unexceptionable channels in which it may flow, exclusive of those to which many of them have long contributed? Nay, who are the persons that do in fact support those missions which Mr. Trew himself admits to have done so much good in his own parish? Are they not the advocates of emancipation? Is he not aware that, with scarcely an exception, the Wesleyan Methodists of Great Britain are amongst the most zealous advocates for the extinction of slavery? Most highly do we honour Mr. Trew for the cordiality with which he has welcomed the cooperation of their missionaries in the wide, but still ill-supplied, field which he himself is so sedulously employed in cultivating. We regard the liberal spirit he manifests towards them, as a decisive evidence of his own earnest zeal for the salvation of his flock, and as a guarantee for the right application of such funds as British benevolence may entrust to him for bringing, within the pale of religious instruction, the 20,000 slaves, belonging to his parish, who are yet strangers to the blessed lessons of



the Gospel. And here we would most earnestly entreat our readers not to be deterred, by our necessary exposure of Mr. Trew's misapprehensions and mistakes, from answering his call for pecuniary aid in his truly laudable, and hitherto eminently successful, efforts. His suggestion indeed, as to employing Anti-slavery Associations in collecting money for his own and similar objects, could only, we admit, have proceeded from a total inacquaintance with the varying religious opinions which, it is well known, divide such bodies. But as the Methodists among them will naturally subscribe to their own missions, the Baptists to theirs, and other Dissenters to the London Missionary Society, so we would urge it on the members of the Church of England, who are embarked in the anti-slavery cause, that, in addition to the funds they may be contributing to their own Missionary Societies, they can contribute to no object more entirely deserving of their support, than that which Mr. Trew has so powerfully and so feelingly pressed upon their notice. We subjoin, in a note, a list of some of the individuals who will be ready to receive contributions, in aid of the association in the parish of St. Thomas in the East, of which Mr. Trew is president, for the conversion and religious instruction of the Negro slaves in that parish\*.

Having disposed of this highly important pamphlet, we must turn for a few minutes to a consideration of the actual state of religion, in Jamaica and the other islands, as it stands connected with the Established Church. The Reports of the Bishops of Jamaica and Barba-

does, of which an abstract may be found in the *Anti-slavery Reporter*, No. 13, for June 1826, exhibit, in strong and striking colours, the lamentable state of religious and moral destitution in which they have discovered their respective dioceses to be sunk. Since that time, some very important returns, made to certain inquiries of the House of Commons, have been printed for its information. They are contained in a large folio volume, entitled, "Slave Population, No. 353," which was ordered to be printed on the 9th of May, 1826. The returns from six of the colonies, Antigua, Montserrat, St. Lucia, Bermuda, the Cape of Good Hope, and the Mauritius, are still wanting. The returns from the other fourteen colonies are, many of them, far from perfect. Still they disclose many very important statistical facts, with which, however, we shall not now trouble our readers, as we mean to confine ourselves entirely to points connected with our present subject, the religious state of the colonies. We shall begin with Jamaica.

In a letter to Earl Bathurst, dated the 4th of March, 1826, the Duke of Manchester informs his lordship, that he is "not aware of any law by which the marriage of slaves is authorised and sanctioned, and their connubial rights recognised and secured; and by which the separation of husband and wife, or of parents and children, by sale or otherwise, is rendered unlawful."

A return had been called for, of the marriages which had been solemnised between slaves from the first of January 1821, to the end of 1825, comprising a space of five years. In that period, the number

\* In London, by Messrs. Smith, Payne, and Smiths, bankers, Mansion-house Street; Bristol, Messrs. Harford, Davis, and Co. bankers; Liverpool, Adam Hodgson, Esq.; Hull, Rev. John Scott; Cambridge, Rev. C. Simcon; Birmingham, Messrs. Attwood, Spooner, and Co.; Cheltenham, Rev. Charles Jarvis; Norwich, Messrs. Gurneys, bankers; Darlington, Messrs. Backhouse and Co.; Edinburgh, Rev. Edward Craig; Glasgow, Rev. Dr. Wardlaw; Aberdeen, Rev. John Brown; Dublin, Rev. Dr. Singer, Trinity College; Cork, Rev. Henry Irvin, Ballins Collig; Belfast, George Black, Esq.; Limerick, Rev. Richard Murray; Kilkenny, Rev. Peter Roe.

of marriages of slaves in the different parishes of Jamaica was as follows:—

	Marriages in five years.	Slave Po- pulation.
Port Royal .....	24 ....	7,000
St. Dorothy's .....	4 ....	5,000
Hanover .....	4 ....	23,000
St. Thomas in the Vale	16 ....	12,000
Trelawney .....	5 ....	27,000
Vere .....	1 ....	8,000
Clarendon .....	2 ....	18,000
St. Mary's .....	141 ....	26,000
St. John's .....	* 3 ....	7,000
St. Elizabeth's .....	2 ....	19,000
Westmorland .....	2 ....	22,000
St. George's .....	104 ....	13,000
St. David's .....	101 ....	8,000
St. James's .....	89 ....	25,000
St. Thomas in the East (Mr. Trew's parish)	1085 ....	25,000
Portland .....	57 ....	8,000
St. Catharine's .....	56 ....	8,000
Kingston .....	601 ....	7,000
St. Andrew .....	no return.	16,000

The case of the parish of Manchester (containing 18,000 slaves) requires a more particular notice. The well-known Mr. Bridges was the rector of this parish†. Previous to 1821, the number of marriages solemnized there, among slaves, had amounted to *five*. In 1821, Mr. Bridges solemnized three marriages of slaves; in 1822, none; and in February 1823, one. Then, all of a sudden, we have a list of 140 marriages (swelled in Mr. Bridges's pamphlet to 184) which were solemnised in the same year 1823; and, for aught that appears to the contrary, on the same day,—for no date, except that of the year, is affixed, although in every other case the day and the month are given. The suppression of the precise date, in this instance, is a circumstance particularly worthy of

remark. Had it not been suppressed, it might probably have been discovered, that all this sudden increment of marriage, which burst upon us from Manchester, took place between the period of the arrival in Jamaica of Mr. Wilberforce's "Appeal," and that of the publication of Mr. Bridges's reply to it;—and an inference might thence have been drawn, that these marriages were solemnized, not so much with a reference to the moral interests of the parties, as to furnish that gentleman with the means of contradicting the position of Mr. Wilberforce, that marriage was almost unknown among the slaves of Jamaica. All honest minds will easily estimate the value of such an argument so manufactured: it was worthy of the cause which it was adduced to support. During the two years which followed the end of 1823, forty-seven more marriages took place in this parish, but under a different incumbent, the Rev. Mr. Dallas. In the year 1823, Mr. Bridges was translated to the parish of St. Ann's, from which parish the return of marriages, now rendered by the Rev. G. W. Bridges, forms a curious contrast with their sudden and almost instantaneous multiplication in his former living of Manchester, just when they were wanted for the refutation of Mr. Wilberforce. The return of marriages from St. Ann's, containing 25,000 slaves, in 1821, 1822, and 1823 is *none*; in 1824, *two*; and in 1825, *one*; three marriages in five years! So much for Mr. Bridges.

Jamaica, however, to use the language of Sir George Rose, appears as the very temple of Hymen when compared with the other colonies. In Barbadoes, the governor tells us (on the 14th March, 1826),

\* These three, the only marriages which have taken place in the parish of St. John's since 1814, occurred on the estate of C. N. Palmer, Esq. on the 5th of February last, and doubtless formed the ground of the boast of that gentleman, on the hustings at Guilford, as to the number of wedding rings he had been called to furnish for the use of his slaves.

† See Negro-Slavery Tracts, Nos. IV., IX., and X.

that there is "no law by which the marriage of slaves is authorized and sanctioned;" and from the rectors of ten of its parishes we have a return of *no* marriage in five years, and from the remaining rector, of *one* marriage in the same time, out of a population of 80,000 slaves. And this is the more remarkable, as this island has been the immediate residence of the bishop; and as his relation and secretary, Mr. Coleridge, in an account of his West-Indian tour, distinguished no less by its illiberality and disingenuousness, than by its unbecoming petulance and disgusting levity, had excited the expectation of a very different result. He represented the bishop as landing in the island of Barbadoes, amid "a thousand wild exclamations of joy, and passionate congratulations, uttered with such vehemence that, new as it then was to me, it made me tremble, till I was somewhat restored by a chorus of Negro girls, 'De bishop is come! De bishop is come! He is coming to marry us, coming to marry us, coming to marry us all!'" The bishop's services in that line, however, are still future. Not one marriage of slaves had, at the date of this return, March 1826, followed his landing in Barbadoes. The only marriage recorded there, in five years, preceded his first arrival by six weeks.

The return of marriages of slaves in the five years, 1821—1825, is *NIL*, in Berbice, Demerara, Dominica\*, Tortola, Tobago, and Honduras, containing altogether a slave population of 135,000 souls. In Trinidad, containing 22,000 slaves, three marriages were solemnized by the Catholic curé, nine by a Methodist minister, and none by a clergyman of the Church of England. In St. Vincent, containing 24,000 slaves, four marriages had been solemnized; in St. Christopher's, containing 20,000 slaves, eighteen; in Nevis,

containing 9,000 slaves, five; in Grenada, containing 25,000 slaves, fourteen; and in the Bahamas, containing 11,000 slaves, seven. A very few marriages had also occurred between free persons and slaves.

In almost all these colonies, as in Jamaica and Barbadoes, there exists no law by which the marriage of slaves is authorized or sanctioned.

In Carriacou, a dependency of the colony of Grenada, the Rev. W. Nash, whose name is already familiar to our readers†, while he confesses that not one marriage of slaves has taken place in his parish, yet gives a modest and ingenuous account of the efforts he has recently been making, with the aid of two planters, Mr. Dallas and Mr. Maclean, to communicate some oral religious instruction to the Negro children on their estates. "I beg leave to add," he says, "that without any feeling of fanaticism, I have the happiest presentiment of our success, especially if what I have taken the liberty to suggest to the proprietors may be attended to;—*that every convenient attention be shewn to the temporal welfare of the Negroes. On this the success of the rest will mainly depend*; for the Negroes, dull as their understandings are, have sagacity sufficient to connect moral causes with physical effects. They will say, *If our masters are really so desirous of promoting our happiness in the next world, why do they not give us an earnest of it by attending to our comfort in this?* I trust they will do so, while they are sowing the 'good seed' for a future harvest. And although experience forbids me to be very sanguine in my expectations, yet I will believe that some of the seed will grow. At least, if good principles fail to produce good practice, it must be allowed that without good principles good practice cannot be expected.

\* In this island there was no marriage solemnized by any Protestant clergyman; but 129 couple were married by Catholic ministers.

† See Tract on Negro Slavery, No. IX.

At all events this acquisition will arise from it; the adversaries of the system will be obliged to desist or to recede to their citadel, the abstract question." We do not pretend to explain the reasoning of Mr. Nash. He seems, however, to be an honest, well meaning man.

The strong repugnance which prevailed to marriage in the island of St. Vincent was evinced by a law peculiar to that island, and which was only repealed in the year 1820. By this law, any clergyman who should be guilty of solemnizing a marriage between a slave and a free person was subjected to a fine of 50*l.*; and the free person, so married, was bound to pay 200*l.* to the owner of the slave, or to serve him for four years. But though this most unreasonable and whimsical clause has been repealed, no recognition of the lawfulness of the marriage of slaves was to be found in the statute book of St. Vincent until December 1825, when it made its appearance clogged with restrictions, which manifest strange and inexplicable apprehensions of the evils likely to flow from all but illicit connexions. It is now made lawful for a clergyman of the Church of England, but for him alone, to solemnize the marriage of slaves; and that only in case the owners or managers of the slaves consent to the union, and the clergyman, on examining the slaves, shall consider them to have an adequate knowledge of the nature and obligation of the marriage vow; it being further provided, that their marriage shall confer no rights on the parties, or their issue, inconsistent with the rights of masters, and of the government, over them and their progeny. Four marriages only have been solemnized in St. Vincent. The clergyman, Mr. Lansdown Gilding, accompanies that statement with a letter apologizing for their small number, on the ground of his previous want of authority to marry the slaves who made application to him. He com-

plains, however, and it seems a great grievance in his eyes, that "vast numbers of slaves have been *clandestinely* married by Methodist preachers," and have not yet applied to be re-married by him. He actually seems to regard these Methodist preachers as evil doers, because they have exerted themselves, in their own congregations, to check the prevailing licentiousness, by inducing the slaves to form permanent unions under the sanction of a religious ceremony. So far from deserving blame on this account, they deserve the highest commendation; and the legislature of St. Vincent owes it to them, and to the moral interests of the community, to pass an act legalizing these marriages, instead of throwing them into doubt, by leaving Mr. Gilding to require the parties to be re-married by him, before they are to be considered as man and wife.

But the most impudent attempt we have ever witnessed to impose on the Government, the Parliament, and the People of this country, appears in the return which has now been made from Dominica, on the subject of the marriage of slaves. In the year 1788, when the West-Indian legislatures were, for the first time, alarmed by the apprehension of parliamentary interference in the government of their slaves, the assembly of Dominica took a very prominent part in the professions of reform which were then current; and it passed an act, which, in some important points, went far beyond the acts of the other islands in its pretended but delusory ameliorations. Among its clauses was one (the 3d) for enforcing religious instruction. Another (the 4th) required all owners and managers of slaves, arrived at mature age, to *exhort* and encourage such slaves to marriage, subjecting the owners &c., in case of their neglecting to do so, to a penalty of five pounds for each neglect. And a third clause (the 22d) imposed a fine of fifty pounds on any White or free

person, who should take away or cohabit with the wife of any slave. Sixteen years after this act was passed, prefaced as it was with the solemn mockery of a declaration, that it was passed with the view of "improving the morals and advancing the temporal and eternal happiness of the slaves," Lord Camden, then secretary of state for the colonies, applied, on the 4th of October 1804, to General Prevost the governor of Dominica, to know what had been done in consequence of the above enactments. The governor applied to the rector, whose report was, that the clauses had not been carried into effect. "A very few even of the free people," he says, "marry, and not one slave since I have been here. Why they do not, I readily conceive, particularly the slaves. *Their owners do not exhort them to it; and they shew no disposition themselves to alter that mode of cohabitation to which they have been accustomed.*" The governor, in reply to Earl Camden, further transmits an account, which shews that, during the sixteen or seventeen years the act had been in existence, not a single fine or forfeiture had been received, nor a single prosecution commenced against defaulters. And in a letter to his lordship, he bluntly observes; "The act of the legislature, entitled 'An Act for the Encouragement, Protection, and better Government of Slaves,' appears to have been considered, from the day it was passed until this hour, as a *political measure* to avert the interference of the Mother Country in the management of slaves. Having said this, your lordship will not be surprised" that certain clauses which he names "have been wholly neglected."

But though the act of 1788 was thus, to all intents and purposes, a dead letter, yet fearing, we suppose, it might prove inconvenient to them, in the case of some vigilant governor or attorney-general choosing to enforce its provisions,

it was determined quietly to get rid of it. Accordingly, in 1821, an act was passed to *revise and amend* their slave laws; in which, after wholly omitting the 3d, the 4th, and the 22d clauses of the act of 1788, and substituting no provision whatever in their room, they slip in, at the very close of a tedious enactment, the following sentence: Sect. 35. "And be it, and it is hereby enacted and ordained, by the authority aforesaid, that the act of the legislature of this island, entitled 'An Act for the Encouragement, Protection, and better Government of Slaves,' be and the same is hereby repealed." Would any man believe what we are now going to state, with the evidence of it before us? The House of Commons, on the 6th June, 1825, called for "a copy of any law by which the marriage of slaves is authorized and sanctioned, and their connubial rights recognized and secured." In reply to this order, the official authorities of Dominica have had the effrontery to transmit, as such law, the 4th and 22d clauses of the act of 1788, which the subsequent act of 1821 had totally repealed; thus taking credit to themselves for provisions which have no existence, nay which they had themselves, by their own fiat, abrogated and annulled five years before. The new act of Dominica, passed in December 1825, contains no provision for the marriage of slaves, though a former act of 1818 permits curates, meaning, we presume, the Catholic curés, to solemnize the marriages of slaves, taking a fee of one pound for so doing.

But we must now close this article, which has swelled to a size far beyond our original purpose. It seemed important, however, to exhibit in its true colours, and these furnished by the colonists themselves, the deplorable state of the slaves as to religion and morals, and to guard against a repetition of those fraudulent and deceptive proceedings, by which this country

was lulled for years into a deep slumber, and by which it is again sought to avert from the colonies the legislative interference of the imperial Parliament, and to beguile the simple and credulous into a belief that the colonial legislatures are at length seriously bent on mitigating and finally extinguishing the state of slavery.

Casting our eyes again over Mr. Trew's pamphlet, we find we have omitted to notice a passage which we had marked for observation, but which is too important to be omitted. It is that (p. 9) where he expresses himself discouragingly of any good to be effected by the religious instruction of the African part of the slave population; a sentiment which, if it argue any thing beyond the operation of that prejudice which prevails around him, would seem to indicate that a very extraordinary degree of intellectual and moral debasement had followed their subjection to West-Indian bondage. We do not mean to contend that this may not furnish a satisfactory solution of Mr. Trew's apprehensions: still, we should have expected him, in a case of this kind, to have hoped even against hope, and to have made the very difficulties of the task a reason, not for despair, but for redoubled exertion. Has not the Saviour died for them also? Has not his blood been shed for them? Are they alone, of the poor to whom his Gospel is to be preached, shut out from experiencing the healing influence of his cross and passion, of his resurrection and ascension, and the sanctifying energies of his grace and Spirit? Or is there any constitutional difference between Africans in the West Indies, and Africans in their native land; between Africans transported to the cane fields of Jamaica, and those liberated from the holds of slave-ships, and placed either in Sierra Leone or in other portions of the Antilles?

Hear the account given us, by competent witnesses, of the aptitude

of native Africans for religious instruction. The Rev. Mr. Bickersteth, who visited Sierra Leone some years ago, tells us; "The lives of several converted *adult* Africans prove that the Gospel, when truly received, produces just the same effects in Africa as in England." In confirmation of this statement we may quote a passage from the Sierra Leone Gazette of the 10th January, 1818, giving an account of the examination, by the governor, council, and principal inhabitants of the place, of the schools in Regent's town; a village inhabited entirely by native Africans recently taken from the holds of slave-ships. It is as follows:—"The appearance of the whole of the scholars (male and female) was equally creditable to their teachers and to themselves. The sight of a well-regulated school has ever been interesting to a feeling heart: we own, that to us it was peculiarly so. We had seen, but a short, very short period before, those beings, now so cleanly clad, so decent in their appearance, no way inferior to our promising country boys and fair country lasses;—we had seen them brought to this colony naked, without any idea of the true God, yoked together as the brute beasts employed by man for the labour of the field; and we thank God for the change. In reading, the *adults* have made considerable progress since the last examination: the boys and girls have kept pace with them."

To the same effect is the testimony of two clergymen from the United States, Mr. Mills and Mr. Burgess, who visited Sierra Leone some years since.

"We visited," they say, "the schools in Freetown. In the male school were about 200 neat, active, intelligent boys." "In the female school were about 100 neatly dressed little girls, many of whom could read and sew. These schools would do no dishonour to an English or American village. There was not a White child in either of them. We

believe schools of White children seldom give fairer proofs of good improvement. The number in all the schools in the colony, including some adults, does not fall much short of 2000."

On Sunday morning "we rode to attend public worship at Regent's town, having a population of twelve or thirteen hundred who have been liberated from slave ships within two or three years past." "Here we saw 200 children in the schools on the Sabbath. More than 1000 of the children and people were present in the church, neatly dressed, sober, attentive to the reading of the word of God, and uniting their voices to sing his praise." "These children, once destined to foreign slavery, are now fed, clothed, governed, and carefully taught in the Christian religion. Assembled in the church to worship God, they are a spectacle of grateful admiration; and their state happily exemplifies the Divine origin and holy principles of the religion in which they are taught."

No less decisive is the testimony of Sir George Collier, in his official Report. Speaking of the schools, he says, "The improvement made by the scholars proves the aptitude of the African, if moderate pains be taken to instruct him. I have attended," he adds, "places of worship in every quarter of the globe; and I do most conscientiously declare, never did I witness the ceremonies of religion more piously performed or more devoutly attended to than in Sierra Leone."

But it may be alleged, that the case is different with those Africans who have been transported to the West Indies. We think not; and we give the ground of our opinion.

A considerable number of liberated Africans, amounting to more than 1000, were introduced into Tortola, in the years 1814 and 1815. They were released from the holds of slave ships in those years by the court of Vice-Admiralty in that island. What is the testimony of the

Methodist missionaries, in the year 1823, only eight or nine years after their liberation, respecting their capacity of moral and religious culture? It is this:

"From their ignorance of the English language," says Mr. Gilgrass, "these liberated Africans naturally laboured under many disadvantages. They were placed in the most unfavourable circumstances; and yet they have done more than thousands of Whites have done in the same space of time." "When these people came first to our chapel, they had not so much as the theory of Christianity; nor did they possess such a knowledge of the English language as to qualify them, though paying all proper attention, to understand fully what they heard. But by continuing to sit under our ministry, which is brought down to almost the lowest degree of intellect, they became gradually enlightened, so as to apprehend the first principles of the doctrine of Christ." "Some of their children attend the school, but I cannot discern any difference between them and those children which have Creole parents."

"Taking the Africans collectively," says Mr. Truscott, "I think they will not suffer any disparagement when compared, on the subject of experimental religion, with an equal number of persons taken promiscuously from the bulk of our society, who have not been of longer standing than themselves. Their moral conduct has been, on the whole, all we could reasonably expect from persons in their circumstances. Many of them are strictly regular and attentive to all the services established for their improvement. Of the private conduct of many, their masters (some of whom are members of our society) speak in the most satisfactory manner." "I believe it can be proved, that in an equal number of Creoles, taken promiscuously from the members of our society, we have been obliged to exercise our punitive discipline



(by suspension or exclusion from the society) more frequently on them than on the captured Africans." "These are very attentive to all our instructions, and this is manifested by their improvement in knowledge. They appear to possess a general knowledge of the great doctrines and precepts of the religion of Jesus Christ. They cannot express themselves in the most pleasing style; but, speaking in their own way, they afford sufficient proof that they make religion the subject of their reflection in private, and that they are not ignorant of the theory of it. Even in this they will bear a comparison with their Creole neighbours." "As it relates to the *learning* of the adults, they get on but slowly, not for want of natural abilities or inclination, but for want of time and opportunity." "Their children in our school are all under six years of age; but they display as great an aptitude for learning, as the other children of the school of the same age."

And in these gratifying statements the missionaries are borne out by Major Moody, one of the commissioners for inquiring into the condition of the liberated Africans, and whose testimony no one will suspect to be liable to the imputation of undue partiality. "I cannot omit," he says, "the opportunity to bear my testimony to the unwearied efforts of the Rector of the parish, the Rev. Mr. Chadderton, and the three Wesleyan missionaries, Messrs. Gilgrass, Felvus, and Truscott, to instruct the poorer classes of their respective congregations. And I was perfectly convinced, from personal inquiries and

observation, that the African apprentices have been greatly improved in their moral conduct by the instructions of the missionaries; and that, generally speaking, those gave the most satisfaction to their masters, who had been most diligent in their attendance to gain religious instruction."

After these incontestible proofs of the docility and capacity of the native Africans, and their aptitude for religious instruction, to what are we to attribute those notes of despondency, not to say despair, which proceed from our zealous and benevolent author, and from another Jamaica clergyman, the Rev. H. Beams of St James's? How is it that they should be tempted almost to pronounce against them a bill of exclusion from the privileges and immunities of the Gospel? Have they lived too long, and too exclusively, in Creole society?—But we say no more. We are persuaded that Mr. Trew will take our remonstrances in good part; and that, in the fear of God, and the faith of Christ, and the love of his brethren, he will revise his too hasty preconceptions, and endeavour to reanimate, in the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, his fainting hopes; and renew, in the strength of Divine grace, his hesitating efforts; and redouble his labours and his prayers, until his experience of the goodness of God shall leave him no ground to doubt that the Gospel is indeed the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth; and that in Christ Jesus "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all."